

CREATIVITY IS BLISS

Text by Marko Kassenaar, August 2015

The *Gallery of Honour* forms the heart of the *Rijksmuseum*, the national museum of The Netherlands, built in 1885. This museum is not only a house for art and historic education; it is a place of national identity and pride.

In 1798, the Dutch government, trying to educate its citizens about their ancestry, began gathering a collection of art works and objects thought to represent the true soul of the Dutch people. The collection contained works by Dutch painters like Rembrandt, Van Ruysdael, Steen and Hals. It also comprised historic objects going back to the 16th/17th-century Eighty Year War – a landmark in Dutch history, for this had been a liberation struggle that had started the existence of the current Netherlands.

Architect Pierre Cuypers was chosen to build the *Rijksmuseum*. Not only did he build a museum elevating the Dutch spirit, he took the idea of its function a step further. He made the building an illustration of how all people can be creative. Cuypers considered creativity as divine and he believed that artists, famous or anonymous, made the world better by producing art. He wanted to show that creativity and inspiration are attainable for everyone: the masters of the Golden Age hang between portraits of unknown craftsmen.

Since the *Rijksmuseum* opened, 130 years have passed. Cuypers' message is still present. The *Gallery of Honour* is not only a passageway where we can look at beautiful paintings; it is an invitation to search for the creativity in ourselves.

About the author:

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Note to the editor:

For more information about the *Gallery of Honour* please visit:

www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/general-information/building-and-presentation/gallery-of-honour

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